

SENATE BILL 3055  
By Bowers

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 40  
and Title 41, relative to programs for ex-offenders.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1.

(a) Subject to an appropriation in the general appropriations act, the board of probation and paroles is authorized to establish a pilot project in any county of the state to assist ex-offenders in their re-entry to society. The pilot project shall contract with nonprofit or faith-based organizations in accordance with state and federal law to provide such assistance in accordance with the provisions of this act.

(b) The board is authorized to seek appropriate grant funding from the federal government and private sources in order to implement this pilot project.

(c) The pilot project shall last three (3) years and at the conclusion of the project the board shall evaluate the effectiveness of the project in assisting ex-offenders in their re-entry to society.

(d) The project is to be an outreach after prison initiative designed to assist the recently released male or female to be able to transition back into family, community and the workplace with minimal stress and increased personal growth capacities. Consistent with the state and federal constitutions, participants may be encouraged to participate in faith-based activities as part of the project.

SECTION 2.

(a) The board shall enter into grant agreements with participating non-profits or faith-based organizations to do the following:

(1) Focus on leadership development, advocacy, and strategies for reentry

into society;

(2) Provide individual counseling, job training and placement, and assistance with restoration by qualified staff and ex-offenders;

(3) Require ex-offender participants to enter into covenant agreements concerning participation in the program;

(4) Develop an advocacy group to identify issues and barriers generally related to bringing ex-offenders back into society, such as family issues, loss of income, credit problems, and child care;

(5) Develop a strategic plan to address each barrier faced by a participant that utilizes the expertise of ex-offenders who have made a successful re-entry;

(6) Organize a project support team that includes, but is not limited to, clergy, judges, probation officers, business owners, politicians and ex-offenders;

(7) Develop a plan that outlines steps, programs and funding methods for the project to ensure ongoing success; and

(8) Develop a mechanism for ex-offenders to have input into the project.

(b) The project shall have among its goals to:

(1) Develop a year-long educational advocacy skill building program with a leadership development curriculum;

(2) Teach ex-offenders how to advocate for themselves through media and public speaking;

(3) Assist program participants to initiate a project that can positively impact ex-offenders as well as impact the prison and criminal justice systems; and

(4) Acquire national speakers for the official program startup and for leadership class graduation.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006, the public welfare requiring it.